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(FILE 'USPAT' ENTERED AT 17:43:03 ON 02 NOV 1998)

L1 587 S SURGICAL (P) SPONGE
L2 3 S L1 AND (BARCODE OR(BAR (A) CODE))
L3 5 S L1 (P) INDICIA

FILE 'JPO' ENTERED AT 17:54:46 ON 02 NOV 1998

L4 3 S L1
L5 0 S L2
L6 0 S L3

FILE 'USPAT, USOCR' ENTERED AT 17:55:46 ON 02 NOV 1998

=> d 12 1-3

1. 5,817,032, Oct. 6, 1998, Means and method for harvesting and handling tissue samples for biopsy analysis; Warren P. Williamson, IV, et al., 600/562; 422/101; 604/319 [IMAGE AVAILABLE]

2. 5,616,499, Apr. 1, 1997, Culture and transfer device for enhanced recovery and isolation of microorganisms; Karl F. Eckner, et al., 435/309.1, 304.2, 309.2 [IMAGE AVAILABLE]

3. 5,031,642, Jul. 16, 1991, Integrator - collector for surgical/medical procedures; Bettie L. Nosek, 600/584; 177/1, 15, 25.13; 604/317, 322 [IMAGE AVAILABLE]

=> d 13 1,5

1. 5,186,322, Feb. 16, 1993, Sponge carrier and counter; Donald R. Harreld, et al., 206/216; 2/159; 128/DIG.24; 206/440, 459.5; 294/1.3; 383/74, 75 [IMAGE AVAILABLE]

5. 3,941,132, Mar. 2, 1976, Interconnected surgical sponges; Arlene Lenaghan, 604/377, 362 [IMAGE AVAILABLE]

DETDESC:

DETD(4)

In the embodiment of the interconnected **surgical** sponges shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the linear connector 22 is an absorbent relatively flat ribbon or tape, such. . . folded in a zig-zag pattern having relatively flat folds 40, as best shown in FIG. 2. As described above, the **sponge** is preferably fixed to the ribbon adjacent one edge, as at 28. In this embodiment, the periphery of the **sponge** is stitched, such as by a conventional hemming stitch, which retains the ribbon at 28 and further retains the indicator tab 32. In the disclosed embodiment, the indicator tab includes an **indicia** 5 to identify the location of the particular **sponge** in the string. The number will notify the surgeon when he is approaching the end of the string, permitting the surgeon to call for another package of **surgical** sponges. Similarly, the indicator tabs may be colored either to identify the location of the **surgical sponge** or to differentiate between different packages of sponges. An identification number may also be printed directly upon the **surgical sponge**. The identification tab may also be utilized in conjunction with a counter system, wherein a counter is disposed with the **sponge** to make certain that each of the sponges has been removed from the incision.